

ATTITUDES TOWARDS PSYCHIATRY IN PRE-CLINICAL AND POST-CLINICAL CLERKSHIPS IN DIFFERENT MEDICAL COLLEGES OF KARACHI

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ABSTRACT:

Objective: A survey of three medical colleges' pre-clinical and post-clinical clerkship students' attitudes towards Psychiatry and their actual decision in choosing Psychiatry as a career.

Design: An instrument comprising of 15 items checks the perceptions of students about psychiatry and choosing Psychiatry as a career was developed and administered upon the students of three medical schools of Karachi.

Results: Nearly more than 60% students hold positive views about Psychiatry. About 32% students believed psychiatrist are not so well-respected and 42% believe they earn less money than other specialists. 54% students were reluctant to choose Psychiatry as a career. The students of post-clinical groups hold more positive view about Psychiatry than pre-clinical groups. Differences were also observed among the responses of students belonging to different medical schools.

Conclusion: Overall the students of all medical colleges showed positive perception about Psychiatry as a subject. However, they were reluctant to choose Psychiatry as a career. The possible factor for this reluctance is disorganised or lack of proper undergraduate teaching of psychiatry in medical colleges and the concept that psychiatrist earn less money and are less respected as compared to other specialists.

KEYWORDS: Pre-clinical Clerkship, Post-clinical Clerkship, Medical Education, Psychiatry, Recruitment.

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INTRODUCTION

Today life is becoming more complex due to advancement in technology and urbanization of society. Media's persistent bombardment of alien cultural values are creating conflict and at times leads to breakdown of established and accepted moral and time honoured cultural values. At the same time continuing problems of the third world countries, lack of education, poor economic growth, unemployment in young people and easy availability of drugs creates a perfect scenario for stress and mental instability in individuals and groups.

All through human history, stress has been a part of life. They have come in various forms, be it a natural disaster or man made creations in the form of war and conflicts. On an individual level stresses of various intensity and duration have been a part of life and people have sought solace and dealt with it through

various means including religious practices and rituals, emotional, recreational diversions or simply a specialized support from community or family support.

Psychiatry is undoubtedly a vital branch of medicine in our fast changing world. Scientific developments in the bio-psycho-social field have opened new vistas in the concept, understanding and management of psychiatric disorders. Psychosomatic disorders are now well recognised by medical specialists besides, in different fields of medicine, particularly, cardiologists, gastroenterologists, gynaecologists/obstetricians, dermatologists, neurologists etc Hence sensitising medical students to the holistic approach to patients is absolutely imperative in the modern medical science. Teaching medical students, behavioural sciences in pre-clinical years and rotation to psychiatry units in clinical years is now well accepted by the academic boards. The idea is not only to create a holistic approach to medicine but to provide them a choice of speciality in medicine which is interesting, intriguing and a challenging career to choose.

Medical students with sound scientific and empirical training are still not disposed to take psychiatry as their speciality. They consider psychiatry as intriguing, time consuming and not a lucrative branch of medicine in the materialistic world today.

These relentless and disabling attitudes of psychiatric disrepute, negative stereotypes and dogmatic rejoinders have generated societal disabilities, to dispel the stigma of psychiatry, even in the medical profession. There is a great need to create understanding of mental illness and break down the preconceived notions amongst the undergraduate medical students.

Attitudes are based on perceptions and perceptions are an amalgam of mindset and environment. Attitudes of medical students towards psychiatry in Germany¹ were examined by conducting a study on 105 medical students. The results showed that in spite of a marked interest in psychiatry, most students thought it improbable that they would become psychiatrist.

In Nottingham a study² was done to discern the effectiveness of a new teaching style in changing medical students attitudes towards psychiatry and mental illness with that of old style, didactic, lecture based teaching. The interactive, students centred, problem oriented teaching of the shortened new curriculum emerged as lucrative in altering medical students attitude as a longer appendage with the traditional teaching.

Another follow up study in 2001,³ fourth year medical students were separated into two groups and were taught psychiatry by two different methods. One year follow up scores were compared with pre-attachment and post-attachment scores in the fourth year suggesting that the positive change in attitudes following psychiatric training in the fourth year significantly decayed during the final year. The two teaching methods did not differ in the magnitude of this reduction.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Sample: The sample for study consisted of 300 medical students studying at different medical colleges of Karachi. These include Dow Medical College, Baqai Medical College and Sindh Medical College. The students were divided into two groups' i.e. pre-clinical group and post-clinical group. About 150 students belong to each group.

Instrument: The instrument consisted of i.e. demographic section and the section assessing attitudes of medical students towards Psychiatry. Demographic section asked information about gender, medical school, basic education and the clinical group of the participants. The other section consisted of 15 questions. All questions follow Likert-Scale format. The instrument was designed keeping in view the negative stigmas and stereotypes attached to Psychiatry as a result of which many students are reluctant to take Psychiatry as a career. Item 1 and 2 check the personal or professional experience of the participants with psychiatric patients. Other items check the perception and knowledge of medical students about positive and negative aspects of joining

Medical Students Survey Form

- **Sex:** Male Female
- **Basic Education:**
Intermediate A levels B.Sc
- **Medical School** _____
- **First Prof/** **Second Prof/** **Third Prof/**
Final Year

1. Do you have any personal experience with mental illness/
 Agree Neutral Disagree
2. Have you seen patients suffering from mental illness?
 Agree Neutral Disagree
3. In Pakistan psychiatric illnesses are still not as common as in the West.
 Agree Neutral Disagree
4. Psychiatry is unempirical/unscientific rather unfocused
 Agree Neutral Disagree
5. Psychiatry is a rapidly advancing field of medicine in Pakistan
 Agree Neutral Disagree
6. On the average, Psychiatrists makes less money than other physicians
 Agree Neutral Disagree
7. Within medicine Psychiatry has a high status and aura of wisdom and intellect.
 Agree Neutral Disagree
8. If Psychiatry is taken as a career, other colleagues or faculty will try to make fun of me.
 Agree Neutral Disagree
9. Entering Psychiatry is a waste of medical education.
 Agree Neutral Disagree
10. Psychiatry tends to overanalyse human behaviour/or exaggerate problems.
 Agree Neutral Disagree
11. I feel joining Psychiatry is an easy way out and a non-challenging career
 Agree Neutral Disagree
12. Most non-psychiatric faculty and staff at my medical college make fun of psychiatry & psychiatric faculty.
 Agree Neutral Disagree
13. Psychiatry is a speciality which helps doctors in all branches of medicine
 Agree Neutral Disagree
14. Psychiatry could be my choice of Postgraduation/Speciality
 Agree Neutral Disagree
15. Psychiatrists are not so well respected as compared to other medical/surgical specialists.
 Agree Neutral Disagree

Psychiatry which ultimately reflect their attitude. Item 14 directly ask about the willingness/ decision of medical students in choosing Psychiatry as a specialty.

Procedure: The study instrument was administered to the medical students at their colleges. The study investigators administered the questionnaire themselves. The data was collected in the month of July and August 2003.

Data Analysis: SPSS computer software was used for data management and analysis.

RESULTS

A total of 300 medical students participated in the survey. These students are studying at different medical colleges of Karachi i.e. Sindh Medical College, Dow Medical College and Baqai Medical College. 37.3% of the participants in the survey were male students and 62.7% were female students. 81.7 % of the participants have entered in the medical school

after Intermediate. 15.7% have done A-levels and only 2.3 % have the basic education up to B.S.c. 0.3% of the students have not mentioned their basic education in the forms. 50% of the medical students belonged to pre-clinical group and 50% of the medical students belonged to post-clinical group. 20.7% of the medical students who participated in this survey reported personal experience of mental illnesses. About 73% reported having professional experience with mental illnesses. About 54% medical students agreed that psychiatric illnesses are as common in Pakistan as West. 24.7% disagreed with that & 21% gave neutral responses. 0.3% of students have not provided answer to this question. The negative attitude of medical students towards Psychiatry was reflected by their responses on the following items. See Table I & II

The statistics obtained from the survey showed that many misconceptions about

TABLE-I
Students' Personal and Professional Experience with Mental Illness

S.No.	Items	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Missing Data
		Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
1.	Personal experience with mental illness	62 (20.7)	43 (14.3)	191(63.7)	4 (1.3)
2.	Professional experience with mental illness	219 (73)	32 (10.7)	48 (16.0)	1 (.3)

TABLE-II
Students' Responses on Negative Items

S. No.	Negative Items	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Missing Data
		Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
1.	Psychiatry is unempirical/unscientific	56(18)	67(22)	174(58)	3 (1.0)
2.	Psychiatrists earn less money than other physicians	128(42)	62(20)	109(36.3)	1(0.3)
3.	Psychiatrists are not so well-respected as other physicians	98(32.7)	55(18.3)	147(49.0)	0
4.	Other colleagues make fun of psychiatry	70(23.3)	57(19.0)	173(57.7)	0
5.	Psychiatry is waste of medical education	26(8.7)	50(16.7)	224(74.7)	0
6.	Psychiatry is non-challenging and easy way-out	44(14.7)	46(15.3)	210(70.0)	0

psychiatry among medical students have improved significantly. Most of the students' responses on negative items revealed that they disagree with common myths about psychiatry which considered psychiatry as non-challenging, unempirical, and unfocussed or waste of medical education. A large number of students (49%) responses were positive towards psychiatrist and they did not think that other staff and colleagues do not respect psychiatrist as other physicians. Though 32% of the student responses were negative, they agreed with these myths and felt psychiatrist do not hold the same respect as other physicians. Many students also disagree with the view that other colleagues or staff would make fun of them if they take psychiatry as a career. Most of the students also disagree with the concept that psychiatry is a waste of medical education but many students, however, believe that psychiatrists make less money than other physicians or specialists. The other noteworthy aspect of findings is that about 15-22% students gave neutral responses to these negative items which reflected that they are not clear about the issue in either way.

Students' responses on the positive items showed that most of the medical students appreciated the importance of psychiatry. They consider psychiatry has high status and aura of wisdom and it help doctors in other field of medicine. It has been observed that approximately equal percentage of students made "agree" response and "disagree" response

about illuminating future of psychiatry. The significant observation made by this study is that though most of the students in survey inspite of accepting the positive aspects of psychiatry are reluctant to choose psychiatry in post-graduation. It seems that the likely reason for this response of students is belief that psychiatrists earn less money as compared to other physicians and also not sure of illuminating future of psychiatry in Pakistan.

49% of the students in pre-clinical group believe that psychiatric illnesses are as common in Pakistan as in West. 60% of the students in post-clinical group believe that psychiatric illnesses are as common in Pakistan as in West. There are some differences in the responses of pre-clinical and post-clinical groups on negative and positive items. See Table III & IV

As the table IV shows more number of students in pre-clinical group considered psychiatry as unempirical/unscientific, non-challenging or waste of medical education than in post-clinical groups. 44.4% of students in pre-clinical group believe that psychiatrists earn less money and 36.4% of the students in the same group agree with the view that psychiatrists are not so well-respected as compared to other physicians. The ratio of students who agree with these concepts is less in post-clinical groups. However, 28% of students in post-clinical group agree that other colleagues and staff make fun of psychiatry whereas only 18% of students in pre-clinical group hold this view.

The evaluation of responses of participants

TABLE-III

Students' Responses on Positive Items

S. No.	Positive Items	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Missing Data
		Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
1.	Psychiatry is rapidly advancing field of medicine	104(34)	85(28)	110(36.7)	1(0.3)
2.	Psychiatrists has high status and aura of wisdom	149(49)	102(34.0)	48(16.0)	1(0.3)
3.	Psychiatry helps doctors in all branches of medicine	182(60.7)	71(23.7)	47(15.7)	0
4.	Psychiatry could be my choice of post graduation	69(23.0)	70(23.3)	161(53.7)	0

on positive items showed that students in post-clinical groups hold more positive views about psychiatry than in pre-clinical groups. The ratio of students who believe that psychia-

try has high status of aura and wisdom and it is an advancing field of medicine which also help doctors in all branches of medicine is high in post-clinical groups. The nature of student's

TABLE-IV
Students' Responses on Negative Items

S. No.	Negative Items	Pre-clinical Group n=151				Post-clinical Group n=149			
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Missing Data	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Missing Data
		Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	- (%)
1.	Psychiatry is unempirical/unscientific	35(23.2)	34(22.5)	79(52.3)	3(2.0)	21(14.1)	33(22.1)	95(63.8)	0
2.	Psychiatrists earn less money than other physicians	67(44.4)	32(21.2)	51(33.8)	1(.7)	61(40.9)	30(20.1)	58(38.9)	0
3.	Psychiatrists are not so well-respected as other physicians	55(36.4)	27(17.9)	69(45.7)	0	43(28.9)	28(18.8)	78(52.3)	0
4.	Other colleagues make fun of psychiatry	28(18.5)	28(18.5)	95(62.9)	0	42(28.2)	29(19.5)	78(52.3)	0
5.	Psychiatry is waste of medical education	16(10.6)	27(17.9)	108(71.5)	0	10(6.7)	23(15.4)	116(77.9)	0
6.	Psychiatry is non-challenging and easy way-out	23(15.2)	23(15.2)	105(69.5)	0	21(14)	23(15.4)	105(70.5)	0

TABLE-V
Students' Responses on Positive Items

S. No.	Positive Items	Pre-clinical Group n=151				Post-clinical Group n=149			
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Missing Data	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Missing Data
		Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	- (%)
1.	Psychiatry is rapidly advancing field of medicine	38(25.2)	53(35.1)	59(39.1)	1(.7)	66(44.3)	32(21.5)	51(34.2)	0
2.	Psychiatrists has high status and aura of wisdom	74(49.0)	54(35.8)	22(14.6)	1(.7)	75(50.3)	48(32.2)	26(17.4)	0
3.	Psychiatry helps doctors in all branches of medicine	87(57.6)	39(25.8)	25(16.6)	0	95(63.8)	32(21.5)	22(14.8)	0
4.	Psychiatry could be my choice of post graduation	31(20.5)	45(29.8)	75(49.7)	0	38(25.5)	25(16.8)	86(57.7)	0

responses on choosing psychiatry in post graduation is different. Less number of students in pre-clinical group agreed with choosing psychiatry in post-graduation. More number of students in pre-clinical group gave neutral responses where as more students in post-clinical group are reluctant to choose psychiatry in post-graduation. This shows that overall most of the students in both groups are reluctant to

take psychiatry in post graduation.

The individual analysis of the responses of medical students belonging to different medical schools gave the following picture. About 53% of students in Baqai Medical College, 51% at Sindh Medical College and 58% at Dow Medical College believe that psychiatric illnesses are as common in Pakistan as in West. For details of other responses. See Table V

TABLE-VI
Students' Responses on Negative Items

S. No.	Negative Items	Baqai Medical College n=100				Sindh Medical College n=100				Dow Medical College n=100			
		Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Missing Data (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Missing Data (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Missing Data (%)
1.	Psychiatry is unempirical/unscientific	18.0	26.0	56	0	27	21	51	1	11	20	67	2
2.	Psychiatrists earn less money than other physicians	63	15	22	0	30	23	46	1	35	44	21	0
3.	Psychiatrists are not so well-respected as other physicians	39	24	37	0	38	11	51	0	21	20	59	0
4.	Other colleagues make fun of psychiatry	20	19	61	0	49	17	34	0	25	12	62	1
5.	Psychiatry is waste of medical education	12	21	67	0	12	11	77	0	2	18	80	0
6.	Psychiatry is non-challenging and easy way-out	18	16	66	0	15	15	70	0	11	35	54	0

TABLE-VII
Students' Responses on Positive Items

S. No.	Positive Items	Baqai Medical College n=100				Sindh Medical College n=100				Dow Medical College n=100			
		Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Missing Data (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Missing Data (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Missing Data (%)
1.	Psychiatry is rapidly advancing field of medicine	33.0	29	38	0	43	18	38	1	28	38	34	0
2.	Psychiatrists has high status and aura of wisdom	45	39	16	0	48	28	23	1	56	35	9	0
3.	Psychiatry helps doctors in all branches of medicine	52	25	23	0	60	25	15	0	70	21	9	0
4.	Psychiatry could be my choice of post graduation	30	27	43	0	19	18	63	0	20	25	55	0

The analysis of responses on negative items showed that students of all the colleges basically disagree with the common myths about psychology in terms of considering it unscientific, unempirical or non-challenging. The students of Sindh Medical College are more likely to agree with the view that psychiatry is unscientific, waste of medical education, non-challenging or other colleagues would make fun of psychiatry if taken as career as compared to the students of two other colleges. Students of Baqai Medical College showed significant agreement with the view that psychiatrist earn less money and are not so well-respected than other physicians as compared to students of Dow and Sindh Medical College. The students of all colleges strongly disagree with a view considering psychiatry as a waste of medical education.

49% students of Sindh Medical College believe that other colleagues and staff would make fun of psychiatry if taken as a career. 20% of the students of Baqai Medical School and 25% students of Dow Medical College agree with the students of Sindh Medical College in this regard. The responses of students on positive items showed that about equal percentage of students in these colleges agreed and disagreed with view of considering psychiatry as a rapidly advancing field of medicine. Most of the students of Dow Medical College and Sindh Medical College though made neutral or agree responses on positive items but a high percentage of them i.e. 63% and 55% disagreed considering psychiatry as their choice for post-graduation. About 30% of the students of Baqai Medical College showed acceptance for taking psychiatry in post-graduation.

DISCUSSION

Recently, a national survey among psychiatry clerkship directors in the United States revealed extensive concern about the effects of managed care on the quality of psychiatric clerkships for medical students⁴. Also among their concerns was the fear that recruitment into the field will ultimately suffer. Given that

recruitment into psychiatry is already at an all-time low⁵ and that some projections indicate the field will fall short of the demand for psychiatrists for years to come⁶, an examination of this issue is of great interest to those involved in psychiatric education. This study investigates whether the psychiatry clerkship experience at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) was related to choosing psychiatry as a specialty.

Although the choice of a medical specialty is influenced by a number of factors^{7,8}, the literature also suggests that the quality of the psychiatry clerkship may be the single most important *modifiable* medical-school influence on recruitment into psychiatry⁹. A number of studies have examined the influence of the medical-student clerkship length, timing, and site on academic performance¹⁰⁻¹². Most of these studies to date have found that timing and length, but not site, of the clerkship was important factors on academic outcomes. Specifically, those who completed longer clerkships and those who rotated later in the academic year performed significantly better on standard examinations than students who took the clerkship earlier in the year or for shorter periods¹¹. Few studies have investigated whether these factors might be related to students' attitudes toward specializing in psychiatry.

The findings of present survey revealed significant improvement of the common myths about psychiatry among medical students studying at three renowned medical colleges of Karachi. Psychiatry is no longer considered as a insignificant subject of medical education, non-challenging or unempirical/unscientific as clearly revealed by this study. This study has identified an important problem about interest of medical student in choosing Psychiatry as a career. Although it is encouraging to find that most students report a positive attitude towards Psychiatry, however, interest in entering the specialty itself is low.

The students responses showed many students still view that psychiatrists earn less money and not so well-respected as compared to other specialists. These two misconceptions

seemed to be major reasons for reluctance of medical students choosing psychiatry in their post graduation.

The other likely reason for lack of interest of students about choosing psychiatry as career might be the stigma towards mental illness "mad patients doctor". Though it was beyond the scope of our study but few other studies have reported that perceptions of mental illnesses are largely negative among medical students.¹³⁻¹⁵ The result of our study revealed that 20% of the medical students who participated in this survey reported personal experience of mental illnesses and 73% reported having professional experience with mental illnesses. This personal or professional experience of mental illnesses might be one of the reasons for lack of interest in choosing Psychiatry as a career. Katherine Boodel¹⁶ in one of her studies investigated the attitudes of fourth year students at Leeds medical school towards patients with mental illness and towards psychiatry as a career. Before placements 60% of students showed a relatively high interest in the specialty, but this fell substantially, to 20%, in students who had completed their placement. Reasons given for these negative responses included, "depressing specialty," "emotionally distressing," and "patients take too long to show signs of recovery." It is suggested that more rational understanding of the subject and of people with psychiatric symptoms will result in reduction of stigmatizing attitudes.

The present survey revealed that students of post-clinical group have better perceptions about Psychiatry as compared to pre-clinical group. About choosing Psychiatry as a career 57% of the students in post-clinical group and 49% students in pre-clinical group gave a negative response in choosing it as a speciality. Previous studies have also shown that only a small percentage of newly qualified doctors intend to enter this specialty.¹⁷ A survey suggested that doctors and medical students tend to share the same negative opinions about mental illnesses.¹⁸ Medical education has an important role in influencing the choice of career. Appropriate psychiatric education of medical students

may do much to reduce the stigma directed towards psychiatry. Medical students also have prejudices about mental illnesses to some degree but those students who reject the stereotype are more likely to choose psychiatry as a career. The more students know about psychopathology adequately, the less likely they are to stigmatize¹⁹.

The findings of present study shows that undergraduate education in psychiatry should be well-structured, with clear aims and professional skills, attitudes and knowledge that are applicable beyond a purely psychiatric setting. This will increase the value placed on psychiatry education. Some other studies in this regard have suggested that medical students' interest in specializing in psychiatry is likely to be based on opinions they formed before and during their training.²⁰

In an article on internet by Royal College of Psychiatrists²¹ it has been pointed out that traditionally psychiatry is taught towards the end of the medical course. The reasons for this may relate to the notion that students require greater emotional maturity and more experience with patients before being confronted with those suffering significant psychopathology. The delay in teaching students about psychiatry until late in their education brings a number of significant disadvantages. The delay in exposure to psychiatric teaching encourages students to think that psychiatry is in some way distinct from the rest of medical practice, perpetuating its potential marginalization and giving an opportunity for stigmatizing attitudes to develop.

As reported by other studies²² in some other regions of world, this study also showed that there are differences in attitudes toward psychiatry among medical students studying at different medical schools. This can be explained by the differences in training methods and contents of undergraduate psychiatric training of each medical school. It has also been observed from the statistical results of survey that students of Sindh Medical College particularly were more likely to view psychiatrists as not so well-respected and that other colleagues or

faculty would make fun of psychiatry. Such views among students also discourage them to join Psychiatry as a career. Sierles and Taylor²⁰ reported that amongst the most important determinants of choosing a career in psychiatry is attendance at a medical school in which undergraduate education in psychiatry is perceived by the faculty and members of the school in general as an important priority, well-supported in terms of resources and of good quality teaching and academic staff.

Limitations

The previous survey²³ revealed a rather dramatic increase in the likelihood of choosing Psychiatry as a speciality specifically after pre-clinical clerkship experience. The implications from these results for psychiatric residencies would seem to point toward aggressively recruiting those students who had an initial moderate interest in psychiatry and a strong interest after completing the clerkship. The meaning of these findings is explored in relation to rotation times, the clerkship setting, (E.R., O.P.D. and in-patient unit) and student autonomy, and their relationship to the choice of psychiatry as a specialty.

Interestingly in our study though the attitudes were positive towards Psychiatry as a speciality but we need to explore the influence of rotation timing, rotation setting and student's autonomy in our environment which were not taken into consideration.

CONCLUSIONS

There are differences in attitudes toward psychiatry among medical students graduating from different medical schools. This can be explained by the differences in training methods and contents of undergraduate psychiatric training of each medical school. The factors influencing attitudes towards psychiatry and medical students' need of psychiatric skills are interesting aspects of future research in the field of psychiatric education for medical students.

Despite the limitations of this study, the results have implications in terms of medical student education and recruitment into psychia-

try. The present results indicate that psychiatric learning experiences in adult outpatient locations are most favoured by medical students. Also, of the factors examined in this study, the strongest predictor of eventual specialization in psychiatry was post-clerkship attitudes, whereas the rotation site and time-of-year were not accounted for in this study. Since the psychiatric clerkship experience is clearly one of the most important elements of recruitment that educators can control, psychiatric residency programs will likely benefit by focusing on high-quality psychiatric teaching with an emphasis on safe, autonomous patient care.

Lastly the authors strongly believe that psychiatrist is the need of today and it is here to stay in the coming Millenniums. The world today is getting insane by the hour, hence preserving and promoting sanity is the utmost duty of the medical profession. After the 9/11 and the Iraq war it is clear that promoting and teaching psychiatry in medical colleges should be taken on war footing particularly in view of the fact that WHO has declared that in the Year 2006, depression will be No. 2 in the list of the ten most disabling medical disorders.

Students idealize and emulate their teachers and their qualities. Academic Councils of all medical institutions must ensure that they select highly qualified teachers with special flare for teaching this highly sensitive subject. Parting knowledge and clinical expertise in psychiatry is an Art. The students must experience genuine interest and feeling for the psychiatric patients by observing their teachers humane caring, respectful approach and attitude. It is incumbent on the Federal Health Ministry as well as Provincial Health Departments to give due importance and promote this rapidly emerging, vital specialty into a dynamic practicing field of medicine.

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